

CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR THE SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS KEPT FOR FUR PRODUCTION – MINK

EFSA-Q-number: EFSA-Q-2023-00869

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Deadline for submission of evidence: 19/04/2024

BACKGROUND

Animal welfare is an important part of EFSA's remit. The EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) plays a pivotal role in evaluating various factors related to farmed animals, including their housing and management, transport, and stunning and killing methods.

In response to the "Fur Free Europe" European Citizens' Initiative, the European Commission has tasked EFSA with issuing a scientific opinion concerning the welfare of animals bred for fur production. This opinion, anticipated for adoption in March 2025 under the [mandate M-2023-00148](#), aims to assess the welfare conditions of mink, foxes, raccoon dogs, and chinchillas for fur production.

EFSA's objective is to comprehensively review existing scientific literature and additional resources to provide a robust scientific foundation regarding the welfare of these animals. This effort supports the European Commission's consideration of potential policy measures in response to the citizens' initiative.

On January 22, 2024, EFSA hosted a stakeholder meeting in Brussels, marking a significant step in its renewed approach to engaging with stakeholders on animal welfare issues. This meeting offered participants an overview of EFSA's ongoing animal welfare initiatives. It fostered a technical dialogue concerning the current evidence and information sources that could contribute to EFSA's scientific advice on the welfare of animals kept for fur production.

EFSA launches this public call for all potentially relevant available evidence (published, unpublished or newly generated evidence) from interested parties to ensure a comprehensive assessment. EFSA will then consider the relevance of the information provided for the risk assessment. Submitting the requested information is without prejudice to the final opinion of the AHAW Panel.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this call for evidence is to offer interested parties (e.g. fur farming operators, national authorities, research institutions, academia) and/or other stakeholders the opportunity to submit documented information (published and/or unpublished) relevant to **the welfare of mink (*American mink, Neogale vison* or *Neovison vison*, previously classified as *Mustela vison*); kept for fur production. The call for evidence encompasses all categories of animals involved in fur production, including breeding animals, juveniles, and those (growing animals) being raised specifically for pelting purposes. It is important to note that killing for pelting falls outside the scope of this mandate.**

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- **Specific Objective 1: Open questions**

EFSA is looking for information related to specific aspects of the **biology, farm practices, breeding and reproduction of mink**, as listed in **Annex A**.

In your submissions, we kindly request that you detail the sources of your information within Annex A or throughout your documents, as appropriate. Please provide references to the origin of your evidence wherever possible, including but not limited to scientific literature, books, technical reports, and industry reports. Additionally, we encourage the citation of unpublished evidence or industry/field evidence where relevant. **This level of documentation is critical for ensuring the credibility and verifiability of the information provided, thereby enhancing the robustness of our assessment process.**

- **Specific Objective 2: Housing conditions**

EFSA is looking for information related to the **current housing conditions of mink kept for fur production during all stages of the production cycle**.

In Annex B, there is a template with the main features requested. Please insert your information directly into the file when possible. You can also include additional information by uploading additional files. Please specify, in Annex B and all your documents, the source of your information by providing any reference when possible (including, but not limited to, scientific literature, book, technical report, and industry report) and/or refer to unpublished evidence or industry/field evidence when applicable. **This level of documentation is critical for ensuring the credibility and verifiability of the information provided, thereby enhancing the robustness of our assessment process.**

- **Specific Objective 3: Welfare assessment protocols**

EFSA seeks information on using **welfare assessment protocols in mink for fur production**.

EFSA is particularly looking into the following:

- Any protocol that is used for assessing the welfare of mink on farm
- Data available and recorded within the application of a specific protocol. Raw or non-aggregated data is especially welcomed.

Please specify, in your submitted documents, the source of your information by providing any reference when possible (including, but not limited to, scientific literature, book, technical report, and industry report) and/or refer to unpublished data or industry/field data when applicable. **This level of documentation is critical for ensuring the credibility and verifiability of the information provided, thereby enhancing the robustness of our assessment process.**

EVIDENCE SOUGHT AND EVIDENCE SUBMISSION FORMAT

EFSA kindly invites interested parties to submit information for each specific objective as outlined below.

Specific Objective 1 (Open questions)

To submit evidence in the context of specific Objective 1, you are invited to complete the designated Word document available on the EFSA webpage dedicated to this call (Annex A). This document features a series of questions curated to gather information deemed crucial for the objectives of this mandate.

In addition to these structured questionnaires, you are welcome to submit further details in the form of complete study reports or publications/reports currently under preparation, especially if they include newly generated evidence.

Specific objective 2 (Housing conditions)

To submit evidence in the context of specific Objective 2, please fill in the Word file on the EFSA webpage of this call (Annex B). This Word file contains the parameters of housing needed for the mandate.

You can also submit additional information in the form of:

- full study reports
- articles or reports under preparation (newly generated evidence)

Specific objective 3 (Welfare assessment protocol)

To submit evidence in the context of specific Objective 3, please submit the following:

- Technical description of the welfare assessment protocol
- Raw data in the form of Excel or csv file
- Any other relevant information.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF DATA AND DISCLOSURE OF CONTACT DETAILS

Interested parties and stakeholders should provide the information described below by 19/04/2024.

To facilitate the collaboration of all interested parties to provide the evidence needed, we seek your consent to disclose the name and address of your organisation/business to the other parties that have expressed an interest in providing the requested information. If you do not wish to make these contact details available, clearly indicate it in our first communication.

CONFIDENTIALITY

According to Article 39 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, EFSA shall not divulge to third parties confidential information received for which confidential treatment has been requested and justified, except for information which must be made public, if circumstances require, to protect public health. It follows that EFSA may give confidential treatment to information, the disclosure of which might significantly harm the competitive position of business operators or other interested parties.

SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION/EVIDENCE

Interested business operators and/or parties should submit the information/data in electronic format **exclusively via the tool Submission Builder "Portalino"** (available [here](#)).

Submission of evidence in any other form (email, third party e-submission platforms, etc) will not be accepted.

Information on how to use Portalino and submit confidentiality requests is available online [here](#). This user guide provides information about submitting dossiers and evidence via Portalino. As such, it should be read together with the [User Guide on Confidentiality](#).

Interested business operators and/or interested parties should submit the following information to EFSA **via Portalino**, clearly stating:

- In **the Subject of the submission: Call for evidence animals for fur production MINK - EFSA-Q-2023-00869**
- The contact details (name of contact person, name of company/organisation, e-mail address and telephone number) of the person responsible for the evidence submission and, if applicable, the list of interested business operators and/or interested parties represented and their contact details;
- If applicable, two separate versions (confidential and non-confidential) of the submitted information/evidence, as indicated [here](#). Each section claimed confidential must be accompanied by a confidentiality request in Portalino. You must also box or earmark each information/passage claimed confidential in the confidential version of the information you share with EFSA.

Please note that confidentiality requests must be submitted if information should be kept confidential since EFSA is required to proactively publish all information, documents and evidence it receives without delay, pursuant to Article 38(1)(c) / 38(1)(d) of the GFL and Article 6(1) of EFSA's Practical Arrangements of transparency and confidentiality.

Please note that EFSA may use or re-use the provided evidence for risk assessment of animals kept for fur production under the same or other legal or regulatory frameworks.

CORRESPONDENCE

Please address any **technical enquiries** to RAL@efsa.europa.eu, ensuring to put "call for evidence on fur animals" in the header of the email.

Should you require assistance when filling in the Word files, submitting additional information, or have specific questions on how to send the evidence, please contact RAL@efsa.europa.eu, ensuring to put "call for evidence on fur animals" in the header of the email.